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LETTER DATED 18 JUNE 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 18 June 1997 from Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq. The Minister states that on 18 June 1997 a joint Special Commission/International Atomic Energy Agency inspection team searched monasteries and churches in Baghdad on the basis of a written order from the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission, Ambassador Rolf Ekéus, and that this represents an affront to the places of worship of Iraqi Christians.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 18 June 1997 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the President of the Security Council

I should like to inform you hereunder of the actions of the Special Commission and of its Executive Chairman, Mr. Rolf Ekéus, on 18 June 1997.

1. At 1625 hours on 17 June, the Chief Inspector of the EG-6 import/export monitoring group at the Baghdad Monitoring and Verification Centre (BMVC) contacted the Iraqi side with the information that his activity for 18 June would be a surprise visit setting out from the Canal Hotel at 0900 hours. On completing his own task for 17 June, the Chief Inspector of the nuclear group also informed the escorts of a surprise visit to take place at the same time.

2. At 0900 hours on 18 June, the Iraqi escorts were waiting for the two teams at the entrance to the Canal Hotel. They were nevertheless surprised when it transpired that the inspection groups had five cars instead of two. It subsequently became clear that a number of the members of monitoring groups at the BMVC had been added to the nuclear and import/export groups without prior notice.

3. At 0930 hours the monitoring groups arrived in Za'faraniyah, in an area where there are the following installations:

(a) Za'faraniyah telephone exchange;

(b) Za'faraniyah cinema and theatre;

(c) Saint Joseph's Monastery, with Saint Paul's Church;

(d) Sayyidat al-Sanabil Convent;

(e) A dormitory for students at the Institute of Technology;

(f) A cinematographic store and laboratory belonging to the Department of Cinema and Theatre of the Ministry of Culture and Information.

The Canadian Chief Inspector, George Healey of the International Atomic Energy Agency, handed the representative of the National Monitoring Directorate a notification of inspection dated 28 January 1997 and signed by Rolf Ekéus, Executive Chairman of the Special Commission (see attachment).

4. At 0950 hours the team divided into three groups, and an inspection was carried out of the telephone exchange, the dormitory, the theatre, the cinema and the laboratory belonging to the Ministry of Information. In this tour, the team used a radiation detector and a device for detecting the presence of chemicals.

5. At 1030 hours the Special Commission team entered Saint Joseph's Monastery with the radiation detector and began to carry out a radiometric survey of the

gardens and grounds. The team members then entered all of the buildings with the radiation detector, asking what was the nature of the rooms and the number of employees and when the monastery had been built. They asked to be introduced to the priest and the sister on the pretext of wanting to make their acquaintance. When the inspection was over, they asked them if they had any problems! Their answer was in the negative. It should be noted that there were in the monastery church at that time pupils having lessons on Christian religious doctrine.

6. At 1100 hours George Healey, the radiation detector with him, entered the Sayyidat al-Sanabil Convent and met the sister present there at that time. She indicated to him that she was not the mother superior. The representative of the Iraqi side pointed out to the Chief Inspector that what the team members were doing was an affront to places of worship Chief Inspector Healey nevertheless insisted on carrying out an immediate inspection, and he entered the convent and conducted a radiometric survey in the grounds and inside the buildings in the same manner as before.

It came to us as a great shock to hear the statement of Rolf Ekéus, Executive Chairman of the Special Commission, absolving himself of the disgraceful act committed by the inspection team against places of worship in Baghdad.

The inspection team carried out this action in compliance with a written order from the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission, Rolf Ekéus. Even supposing that Mr. Ekéus had not known what the team was doing, it could not be any the less shocking, because that would mean that inspection teams can act in a purposefully detached manner in accordance with instructions from sources other than the Special Commission. The present case confirms the facts that were established by Mr. Tariq Aziz, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, in his letter of 15 June 1997 addressed to you.

Mr. Tariq Aziz concluded his aforesaid letter by asserting that in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council Iraq has the right to safeguard its national security. It hopes the Security Council, which has always stressed the necessity of respecting Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity, will adopt a concrete position embodying that recognition and balancing the rights of the Special Commission and Iraq's legitimate rights. Iraq also hopes that the Council will direct the Special Commission to act within the limits of its mandate and carry out its work in a business-like and professional manner and without seeking to prolong it. The Commission should complete its work and submit its final report to the Security Council stating the firm fact that Iraq has discharged all its obligations under section C of resolution 687 (1991).

The inspection team went to great lengths on 18 June 1997 to fabricate pretexts and allegations concerning the presence of nuclear and other materials in a telephone exchange, a cinema, a theatre, a student dormitory, and a cinematographic store and laboratory. It then affronted the places of worship of Iraqi Christians and inspected Saint Joseph's Monastery, Saint Paul's Church and the Sayyidat al-Sanabil Convent on the same prefabricated pretexts. We therefore call upon you and, through you, upon all who are fair-minded among the

members of the Security Council, to do justice by Iraq by putting an end to the deliberate pattern of unprofessional conduct on the part of the Special Commission. The Special Commission should submit its final report to the Security Council stating the firm fact that Iraq has discharged all its obligations under section C of resolution 687 (1991), and the Security Council should proceed on an urgent basis to consider the implementation of paragraph 22 of that resolution.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq

Attachment

PHONE NO. : 7173389 Jun. 19 1997 11:07PM P01

UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

UNSCOM

UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL COMMISSION

S/C Res 687 (1991)

Reference: N15/IAEA

NOTIFICATION OF INSPECTION SITE IN ACCORDANCE WITH UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS 687 & 715 (1991)

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Pursuant to the provisions of Part C of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 687 & 715 (1991), the Special Commission has designated for inspection an area in and around an establishment/facility in the vicinity of:

33-15 N 044-30 E

Rolf Ekéus
Executive Chairman
Office of the Special Commission

New York
26 January, 1997